REMARKS

The application has been amended and is believed to be in condition for allowance.

Claims 22-33 and 35-40 are pending. New claims 39-40 are based on prior claims. Claim 32 is amended to recite the flanges and grooves each present a profile in a semicircle. No new matter is entered by this amendment.

Drawings

The drawings were objected to under 37 CFR 1.83(a). The Examiner stated that the drawings must show every feature of the invention specified in the claims. The Examiner stated that a block being free of the pair of flanges as set forth in claim 36 must be shown or the feature(s) canceled from the claim(s).

The drawing does indicate a region where the flanges are optional, i.e., may not be present.

The original specification discloses: "The grinding of the flanges is carried out only on the portion covered by assembly (13) when block walls are joined at a right angle and with conventional clamping."
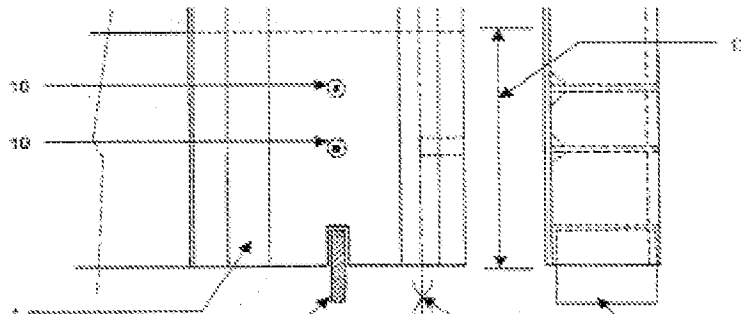
The above portion of Figure 2 shows the portion 13 which would be free of flanges, when joined at a right angle.

Withdrawal of the drawing objection is solicited.

Specification

The disclosure was objected to because the Examiner stated that the specification as originally filed does not contain a language describing an "upper bearing surface" and a "lower supported surface" found in the amended claims.

The specification has been amended to provide appropriate language.

No new matter is entered by this amendment.

Rejections under 35 USC 103

Claims 22-33 and 35-38 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over ROLLE (US 3,343,328) in view of STREY (DE 19835241).

Applicant respectfully disagrees.

Although ROLLE shares some features with the claimed invention, STREY does not provide a basis for modifying ROLLE such that the claimed invention results.

Starting from ROLLE, it is noted that this document shows countersunk holes receiving securing means. As noted by the Examiner, these holes are indeed referenced holes 54.

However, at the same time, ROLLE discloses a clearance between two superposed blocks. This clearance is for aeration purposes and is combined with holes 180.

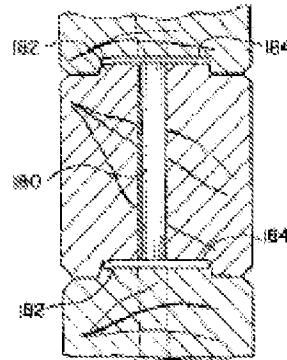This is shown in Figure 15 of ROLLE reproduced below.

FIG. 15

Figure 15

On the other hand, STREY discloses a block without such clearance for aeration purpose and without securing means such as screws.

Modifying ROLLE in view of STREY would not have been made by one skilled in the art because their teachings are actually incompatible.

Providing pairs of flanges and grooves while preserving a clearance between the blocks and while screwing the blocks in holes 54 would dramatically decrease the mechanical strength of the assembly and would lead to a bending of the lower face of the upper block. Indeed, the pair of flanges and grooves would increase the length of the free surface of the upper block located over the clearance.

Accordingly, one skilled in the art would have regarded ROLLE and STREY as two alternatives and as two different - and incompatible - references.

As to the diameter of the flanges and the grooves, the Examiner states in page 4 of the Action that STREY (Figure 1) discloses a diameter of each groove is greater than a diameter of the corresponding flange.

The applicant has not found this teaching in STREY. The drawings of STREY are not accurate at all as to the size and shape of the block but the flanges and the grooves seem to have the same size This means that the contact of the block in between the pairs of flanges/grooves is not optimal and even guaranteed.

This is may be not a problem in STREY since there is no screwing or nailing at this level.

In contrast, this would be a problem in the claimed invention.

This further shows that STREY is not good basis to make the present invention.

It should also be noticed that, in the present invention, the profile in semi-circle of the flanges and the grooves as in claims 25, 32, and 40 further improves the cooperation of two blocks.

The matching semi-circle of the flanges and grooves eliminates or minimizes spacing between blocks.

In contrast, ROLLE discloses a block with a clearance for aeration purpose. Thus, ROLLE would not want to have this recited semi-circle profile as this profile would be close-fitting and eliminate the clearance for aeration.

In the present invention, this shape provides with the best contact surface between the flange and the groove thereby preventing any discontinuity in the clearance between the flange and the groove. The present invention and ROLLE have different requirements and hence different structures.

Similar to ROLLE, the shape of flange (groove) of STREY achieves an imperfect contact. This is not an issue in STREY because the imperfect contact has not strong consequence in STREY.

Thus, one of skill would not be motivated to provide the semi-circle profile in either of ROLLE or STREY.

But in the context of the present invention, where the contact between the blocks in the place between the pairs of flanges and grooves is important to secure the blocks correctly without deforming them, the semi-circle profile shape is important.

This is a further characteristic of the invention which does not appear at all in ROLLE and in STREY.

Thus, applicant believes that it is clear that the claimed invention is non-obvious.

Reconsideration and allowance of all the claims are therefore respectfully requested.

The present amendment is believed to be fully responsive to the Official Action. Entry of the amendment and allowance of all the claims is solicited.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 25-0120 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17.

Respectfully submitted,

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